

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS  
RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO - 1207  
ANSWERED ON – 13/12/2023

**SAFETY REGULATIONS FOR NEW TUNNEL PROJECTS**

**1207. SHRI AYODHYA RAMI REDDY ALLA:**

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the recent accident in Himalayan project Char Dham National Highway has resulted in the evolution of safety regulations, ensuring a proactive approach to risk management in the challenging mountainous terrain;
- (b) if so, the details of ways regulatory bodies can enhance oversight and enforcement mechanisms to prevent lapses in safety protocols, particularly considering the unique and treacherous conditions of Himalayan projects; and
- (c) the details of the advancements in safety technology to be integrated into regulatory frameworks for Himalayan projects to reduce the likelihood of accidents and improve emergency response capabilities?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

(SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI)

(a) & (b) The recent accident / collapse in Silkyara Tunnel on NH-134 under Chardham National Highway Improvement Programme took place during construction. The project is under implementation by National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode. The contract conditions provide for all safety norms & regulations in line with the National/ International safety standards. Construction works including the safety aspects are supervised by Authority Engineer. Field officials and senior officers of NHIDCL also regularly inspect and monitor the work including its various safety aspects. Thus, safety measures are part and parcel of highway projects including tunnel projects during different stages of design, construction and Operation

& Maintenance (O&M). Road Safety audits at different stages viz. design stage, construction stage, pre-opening stage and operation stage are also carried out in National Highway projects including tunnel projects to ensure the safety of road users.

(c) Framing of guidelines on integration of safety technology into the regulatory frameworks of the highway projects including those in the Himalayan projects and their up-gradation to improve safety, to reduce accidents and to improve emergency response is a continuous process. Subsequent to the collapse in Silkyara Tunnel on NH-134, an Expert Committee has been constituted by the Government for investigation of the reasons for collapse of the tunnel and for recommendations in respect of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to be followed in case of tunnel collapse / tunnel construction.

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